

Equine Body Condition Scoring



BCS 1. Poor

Horses with a BCS of 1 are extremely emaciated. The spinous processes of the vertebrae, ribs, dock, and points of the hip and buttock are all prominently seen. The bones of the withers, shoulders, and neck are also easily identified, and no fat is palpable anywhere. Horses with a BCS of 1 are considered unfit to travel.

BCS 2. Very Thin

Horses with a BCS of 2 are emaciated. The vertebral spinous processes are prominently seen, as well as the ribs, dock, and points of the hip and buttock. The bone structures of the withers, neck, and shoulders are still fairly noticeable.



BCS 3. Thin

The spinous processes are still outstanding; however, their lower halves are covered by fat. The individual vertebrae are not distinguishable. A very thin layer of fat can be felt over the ribs. The dock is prominent; however, the points of the buttock are not visible. The points of the hip are visible but rounded. The withers, shoulders, and neck are all accentuated.

BCS 4. Moderately Thin

The horse's spinous processes create a negative crease along the back. The rib outlines are faintly seen. The points of the hip are not visible, and the withers, neck, and shoulders are not obviously thin. Fat can be felt around the dock.



BCS 5. Moderate

The spine of the horse is level with surrounding muscle height. Ribs are not visible but are easily felt. The fat palpable around the dock feels slightly spongy. The withers appear rounded with the neck and shoulder blending smoothly into the body.

BCS 6. Moderately Fleishy

There is fat around the dock that feels soft, whereas fat over the ribs feels spongy. There are small fat deposits along the sides of the withers, behind the shoulders, and along the sides of the neck. There might be a slight crease down the back of the horse.



BCS 7. Fleishy

Fat is noticeable within the withers, neck, and behind the shoulders. The horse's ribs can be felt, but there is noticeable fat between individual ribs. Fat around the dock is soft. There may also be a crease down the back of the horse.

BCS 8. Fat

The horse has a crease down the back. Spaces between the ribs are so filled with fat that the ribs are difficult to feel. The area along the withers and dock are filled with fat, though fat around the dock is very soft. The space behind the shoulders is filled in flush. There is some fat deposited along the inner buttocks.



BCS 9. Extremely Fat

The back crease is very obvious, with fat appearing in patches over the ribs. There is bulging fat around the dock, withers, shoulders, and neck. The inner buttocks may be rubbing together due to excessive fat. The flank will be filled-in flush.

Source: Henneke D, Potter G, Kreider J, Yeates. Relationship between condition score, physical measurements and body-fat percentage in mares. *Equine Vet J.* 1983;15(4):371–2; Photo source: Equine Health School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis

Equine Body Condition Scoring Range

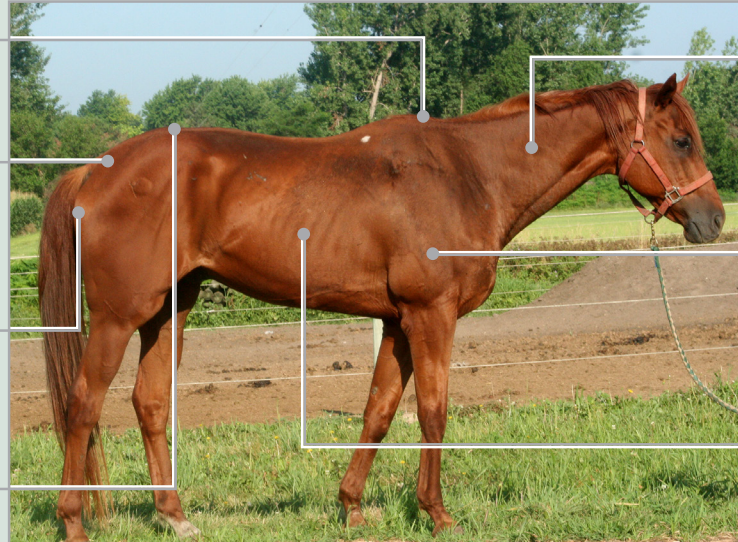
Body Condition Scoring Anatomy

Withers

Dock

Point of buttock
(tuber ischii)

Point of hip
(tuber coxae)



Neck

Shoulder

Ribs

This information was developed by staff veterinarians at the CFSPH and approved by APHIS for use as training materials for the USDA-APHIS National Veterinary Accreditation Program.

